

Delaware Shootings 2011

A Comparative Working Paper of Suspects and Victims in Delaware

June 2014



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Executive Summary

The following report is the first in a series examining shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of another person, not including accidental, self-inflicted shootings, or shootings that were committed in self-defense. Topics discussed in this report include: shootings by police jurisdiction, demographic characteristics of suspects and victims, day and time of the shooting, suspect motive, and suspect/victim relationship. The data presented in this report are based on information obtained from records within Delaware's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) and media sources, including local newspapers and police department websites.

Key Findings

A total of 155 shooting incidents were reported in Delaware in 2011. The 155 shooting incidents resulted in the injury or death of 172 victims. Over half (55.2%) of the 172 shooting victims were shot in Wilmington. Of the remaining 77 shooting victims, 43 (25% of all victims) were shot in suburban New Castle County, 24 (14%) victims were shot in Kent County, and 10 (5.8%) were shot in Sussex County. Thirty-one of the 172 shooting victims died from their injuries. A review of criminal complaint records showed that a total of 249 suspects were implicated in the shootings. As of March 2014, 125 of the 249 shooting suspects were identified by name, and 104 suspects were arrested.

Of the 125 known shooting suspects, 120 were unique individuals (five were involved in more than one incident). The 120 unique known suspects were predominately males under 30 years old. Males accounted for 111 (92.5%) of the 120 unique known suspects overall, while males younger than 30 accounted for 92 (76.7%) of unique known suspects. The average age of unique known suspects was 24.1 years old. Shooting victims were commonly older than shooting suspects; the average age of shooting victims was 27.8 years old. Males accounted for 88.4% of all shooting victims. Black males were overrepresented as both suspects and victims; 85.8% of unique known shooting suspects and 78.5% of shooting victims were Black males.

For most incidents where both suspect and victim information was available, 83.5% involved suspects and victims who were all of the same race. More than two-thirds of these incidents involved suspects and victims who were in the same age range.

Compared to shooting victims, unique identified suspects were more likely to have prior drug, weapon, violent, or other felony charges in their Delaware criminal arrest history and were more likely to have been arrested as a juvenile. Apparent motives/circumstances surrounding shooting incidents included robbery (47.2%), altercations (34%), drugs (9.4%), and violence related to intimate partner situations (7.5%). Suspects and victims knew each other in 69.2% of cases where victims-offender relationship information was provided.

Introduction

This report is the first in a series examining shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of another person, not including accidental, self-inflicted shootings, or shootings that were committed in self-defense. The focus of this report is calendar year 2011. Topics discussed in this report include: shootings by police jurisdiction, demographic characteristics of suspects and victims, day and time of the shooting, suspect motive, and suspect/victim relationship.

This report was originally published in 2012 and updated in 2014 to reflect an expanded set of data the Delaware Statistical Analysis Center was granted access to in 2013 and an enhanced methodology as a result of this access. This revised approach with additional data revealed six more incidents and 14 more victims than had originally been identified. This update brings the 2011 report into general alignment with the methodology used in subsequent reports allowing for more accurate comparability over time.

Methodology

The data presented in this report were obtained from the Delaware's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), a central depository for police and court records in Delaware, and media sources, which include local newspapers and state, county, or local police department websites.

Complaint records were acquired from CJIS. After the initial download, the records were screened and filtered to identify cases where a firearm discharge resulted in the injury or death of one or more victims. Records were then reviewed individually to verify that every incident included at least one victim who was injured or killed by a firearm, excluding shootings that were accidental, self-inflicted, or committed in self-defense. In the next step, a search of local media sources was conducted to identify shootings that were not captured in the CJIS complaint data. These additional incidents were then located within CJIS and reviewed as above.

In the next step, shooting information from both sources was then merged into a single work file. Once the total number of incidents, suspects, and victims were confirmed, data fields for day/time of the incident, suspect/victim demographics, and suspect/victim criminal history information were added to the dataset. This information was then analyzed and the findings presented in this report.

Shooting Incidents, Victims, and Suspects

In 2011, there were 155 shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of 172 victims. The number of shooting incidents, victims, and suspects are shown in Table 1. These totals do not include self-inflicted shootings, accidental shootings, or shootings that were committed in self-defense.

Table 1 - Shootings in 2011 by Reporting Agency						
	Reporting Agency	Shootings		Shooting Suspects		
		Incidents	Victims	All Suspects	ID by Name	Arrested
NEW CASTLE	Wilmington PD	88	95	137	49	43
	Suburban New Castle County	37	43	57	33	26
	New Castle County PD	29	35	46	28	23
	DSP Troop 2	2	2	2	1	1
	DSP Troop 6	2	2	5	3	1
	DSP Troop 9	1	1	1	0	0
	Env. Control - Fish & Wildlife	1	1	1	0	0
	New Castle City PD	1	1	1	0	0
	Newport PD	1	1	1	1	1
	New Castle County Total	125	138	194	82	69
KENT	Dover PD	13	13	23	20	14
	DSP Troop 3	8	11	15	11	10
	Kent County Total	21	24	38	31	24
SUSSEX	DSP Troop 5	5	5	12	9	9
	DSP Troop 4	1	1	2	2	1
	Laurel PD	1	1	1	1	1
	Milford PD	1	2	1	0	0
	Seaford PD	1	1	1	0	0
	Sussex County Total	9	10	17	12	11
Statewide Total		155	172	249	125	104

Wilmington PD led the state with 95 (55.2%) victims shot in 2011. Police agencies in suburban New Castle County together accounted for 43 (25%) victims shot, with New Castle County PD leading other suburban New Castle County police agencies with 35 (20.3%) victims shot. Overall, 138 (80.2%) of the 172 shooting victims reported statewide in 2011 were from New Castle County, while Kent and Sussex counties accounted for 24 (14%) and 10 (5.8%) shooting victims, respectively.

A review of CJIS incident reports found that 249 suspects were implicated in the shootings. As of March 2014, 125 (50.2%) of the 249 possible suspects were identified by name, and 104 suspects (41.8%) were arrested.

Shootings that resulted in the death of the victim are shown in Table 2. Of the 172 victims shot in 2011, 31 (18%) died from their injuries. Wilmington led the state in fatal shootings with 21 (67.7%) victims killed. An additional 6 victims were fatally shot in suburban New Castle County, bringing the total number of victims killed in New Castle County to 27 (87.1%). Dover P.D. in Kent County and Delaware State Police Troop 5 in Sussex County accounted for the remaining four gun homicides. As of March 2014, 43 individuals were identified as potential suspects in the 19 (67.9%) of the 28 fatal incidents. Of these suspects 32 were identified by name and 28 had been arrested¹.

Table 2 - Fatal Shootings in 2011 by Reporting Agency						
	Reporting Agency	Fatal Shootings		Suspects in Fatal Shootings		
		Incidents	Victims	All Suspects	ID by Name	Arrested
NEW CASTLE	Wilmington PD	19	21	27	16	14
	Suburban New Castle County	5	6	10	10	8
	New Castle County PD	5	6	10	10	8
	New Castle County Total	24	27	37	26	22
KENT	Dover PD	2	2	4	4	4
	Kent County Total	2	2	4	4	4
SUSSEX	DSP Troop 5	2	2	2	2	2
	Sussex County Total	2	2	2	2	2
	Statewide Total	28	31	43	32	28

¹ For the purposes of homicide incidents only, arrests include both the arrest and detention of a suspect and what are termed 'exceptional clearances.' The latter term refers to situations where a suspect is identified, his/her location is known, and the suspect could be arrested except for extenuating circumstances that preclude an arrest (e.g., suspect death, incarceration in another state). Four suspects in the homicide arrest counts are exceptional clearances – three committed suicide at the conclusion of the incident and one is incarcerated in another state serving a sentence for a serious crime.

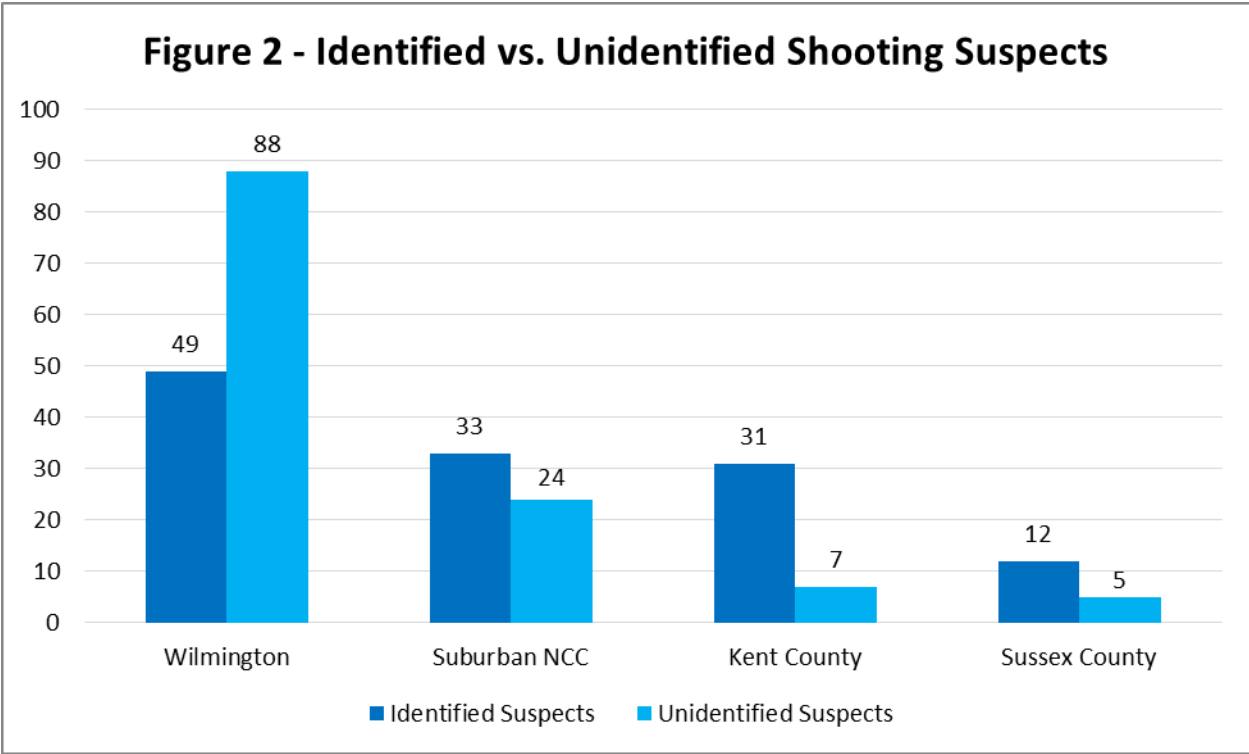
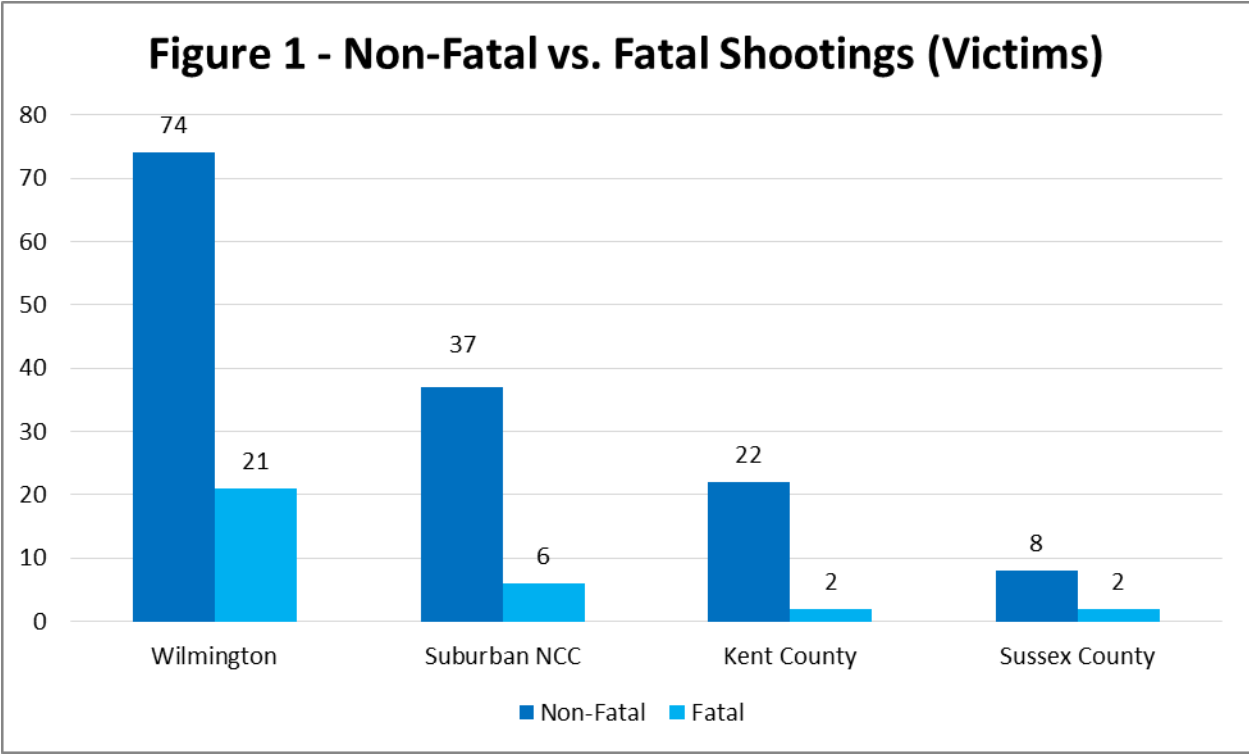


Table 3 - Summary of 2011 Shooting Incidents, Victims, and Suspects

	Reporting Agency	Shootings		Firearm Homicides		Shooting Suspects				
		Incidents	Victims	Incidents	Victims	All Suspects	ID by Name	Not Identified	Arrested	Not Arrested
NEW CASTLE	Wilmington PD	88	95	19	21	137	49	88	43	94
	Suburban New Castle County	37	43	5	6	57	33	24	26	31
	New Castle County PD	29	35	5	6	46	28	18	23	23
	DSP Troop 2	2	2	0	0	2	1	1	1	1
	DSP Troop 6	2	2	0	0	5	3	2	1	4
	DSP Troop 9	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Env. Control - Fish & Wildlife	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
	New Castle City PD	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Newport PD	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
	New Castle County Total	125	138	24	27	194	82	112	69	125
KENT	Dover PD	13	13	2	2	23	20	3	14	9
	DSP Troop 3	8	11	0	0	15	11	4	10	5
	Kent County Total	21	24	2	2	38	31	7	24	14
SUSSEX	DSP Troop 5	5	5	2	2	12	9	3	9	3
	DSP Troop 4	1	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	1
	Laurel PD	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
	Milford PD	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Seaford PD	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Sussex County Total	9	10	2	2	17	12	5	11	6
	Statewide Total	155	172	28	31	249	125	124	104	145

Shooting Suspect and Victim Demographics

Race, sex, and age information for the 120 unique known shooting suspects is shown in Table 4. Suspects were predominantly male (92.5%). The average age for the 120 unique known shooting suspects was 24.1 years old. Suspects under 30 years old comprised 76.7% of the 120 unique identified shooting suspects.

Black males 25 years old and younger accounted for more than half (60%) of all unique identified shooting suspects. White female shooting suspects tended to be younger on average (23.1 years old) compared to other unique known suspects, while the average age of White male shooting suspects was older (33.8 years old) compared to other unique known suspects.

Table 4 - Race, Sex, and Age of 2011 Shooting Suspects (Unique Individuals)									
Age Range	Male			Females			By Ethnicity		Total
	Male Total	Black Male	White Male	Female Total	Black Female	White Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	
14 to 17 Years	11	11	0	2	0	2	1	1	13
18 to 21 Years	40	37	3	1	0	1	0	0	41
22 to 25 Years	25	24	1	1	0	1	0	0	26
26 to 29 Years	16	16	0	4	2	2	0	0	20
30 to 34 Years	10	10	0	1	0	1	0	0	11
35 to 39 Years	5	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	5
40 to 44 Years	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
45 to 49 Years	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
50 and Years Over	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	111	103	8	9	2	7	2	1	120
Mean Age	24.1	23.4	33.8	24.1	27.5	23.1	27.5	17.0	24.1

Demographic characteristics of shooting victims are shown in Table 5. Shooting victims were predominantly male; of the 172 total shooting victims, 152 (88.4%) victims were male. Approximately three out of every four shooting victims were Black males (78.5%).

Shooting victims were older on average compared to shooting suspects. The average age for shooting victims was 27.8 years old. Approximately half (49.4%) of the 172 shooting victims were 26 years and older.

Table 5 - Race, Sex, and Age of 2011 Shooting Victims										
Age Range	Male				Females			By Ethnicity		Total
	Male Total	Black Male	White Male	Asian Male	Female Total	Black Female	White Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	
14 to 17 Years	12	12	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	13
18 to 21 Years	35	29	6	0	2	2	0	1	0	37
22 to 25 Years	32	29	2	1	5	5	0	0	0	37
26 to 29 Years	23	23	0	0	4	3	1	0	0	27
30 to 34 Years	20	19	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	21
35 to 39 Years	13	11	2	0	2	2	0	2	0	15
40 to 44 Years	8	6	2	0	2	1	1	1	0	10
45 to 49 Years	3	3	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	5
50 Years and Over	6	3	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	7
Total	152	135	16	1	20	15	5	5	0	172
Mean Age	27.4	26.8	32.9	22.0	31.1	26.7	44.2	32.6	-	27.8

Demographic Profile of Shooting Incidents

Since a number of shootings involved multiple suspects and/or multiple victims, comparing all victims with all suspects to understand the demographics of 2011 shooting incidents can be misleading. Instead, race and age data for the victims and named suspects involved in each incident were examined and then condensed down so that each incident could be assigned to single categories for victim age, victim race, suspect age, and suspect race. Each victim-suspect category pair could then be compared and the incident categorized on the extent to which suspects and victims were similar to or different from each other based on each pairing.

Table 6 explores the relationship between suspect and victim race based on the categories assigned for each incident. Of the 73 incidents in 2011 where race information was available for both named suspects and victims, 61 (83.5%) involved suspects and victims who were all or mostly of the same race. This percentage was notably higher for incidents that involved Black victims (94.9% of 59 incidents) and markedly lower for incidents involving White victims (35.7% of 14 incidents).

Table 6 - Suspect to Victim Race Correlation						
	Victim Race Category Assigned to Incident					
	Black	Percent	White	Percent	Total	Percent
ALL Suspects and ALL Victims of Same Race	54	91.5%	5	35.7%	59	80.8%
MAJORITY of Victims and Suspects BOTH of Same Race	2	3.4%	0	0.0%	2	2.7%
Victims Shot by Suspects of OPPOSITE Race	3	5.1%	9	64.3%	12	16.4%
Total	59	100.0%	14	100.0%	73	100.0%

Table 7 explores the relationship between suspect and victim age based on the categories assigned for each incident. In 73 incidents, age information was available for both named suspects and victims. One of five broad age categories was then assigned to victims in an incident if at least a majority belonged to the same age group. This same process was repeated for the suspects in each incident. In 66 incidents, each victim and suspect group could be assigned an age category and were then compared (for 7 incidents there was no majority age group). In the incidents where victim and suspect age categories could be compared, 68.2% of shooting incidents involved suspects and victims who were within the same age range (indicated by the shaded boxes in the table). This proportion was highest for incidents involving victims aged 18 to 30 years (85%). For the three oldest age groups, most incidents involved victims shot by younger suspects. Overall, 51 of the 66 incidents examined (77.3%) involved suspects in the aged 18 to 30 group.

Table 7: Victim-Suspect Age Correlation by Incident level							
		Victim Age Category Assigned to Incident					Suspect Category Totals
		Under 18	18-30	31-40	41-50	Over 50	
Suspect Age Category Assigned to Incident	Under 18	1	5	0	0	0	6
	18-30	2	34	10	2	3	51
	31-40	0	1	3	2	0	6
	41-50	0		0	2	0	2
	Over 50	0	0	0	0	1	1
Victim Category Totals		3	40	13	6	4	66

Criminal Histories of Shooting Suspects and Victims

Table 8 summarizes the criminal arrest histories for shooting suspects and victims. A larger percentage of the 120 unique identified shooting suspects had a prior arrest in Delaware compared to the 172 shooting victims. Shooting suspects were also more likely to have a prior drug, weapon, violent, or other felony charge in their Delaware criminal history compared to shooting victims.

Table 8 - Shooting Suspect and Victim Criminal History				
Criminal History	Identified Unique Suspects		Victims	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Known Suspects and Victims	120		172	
Has an Arrest History in Delaware	117	97.5%	150	87.2%
≥1 Arrest was for a Felony*	99	84.6%	108	72.0%
Felony Drug Arrests	64	54.7%	75	50.0%
1 or 2 Arrests	43	67.2%	42	56.0%
3 Arrests or More	21	32.8%	33	44.0%
Felony Weapon Arrests	63	53.9%	61	40.7%
1 or 2 Arrests	48	76.2%	50	82.0%
3 Arrests or More	15	23.8%	11	18.0%
Other Felony Arrests	85	72.7%	87	58.0%
1 or 2 Arrests	41	48.2%	44	50.6%
3 Arrests or More	44	51.8%	43	49.4%
Violent Felony Arrests**	92	78.6%	100	66.7%
1 or 2 Arrests	41	44.6%	41	41.0%
3 Arrests or More	51	55.4%	59	59.0%

*Felony percentages are of those with an arrest history.

**Violent felonies included in this table are those defined in Title 11, §4201c of the Delaware Code.

Table 9 compares the age at first criminal justice system contact for known shooting suspects and victims. The table shows that 83.8% of shooting suspects and 70% of shooting victims were juveniles at the time of their first arrest in Delaware.

Table 9 - Age at First Contact with Delaware's Criminal Justice System				
Age	Known Suspects		Victims	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
13 Years or Less	55	47.0%	49	32.7%
14 to 17 Years	43	36.8%	56	37.3%
18 to 21 Years	12	10.3%	18	12.0%
22 to 25 Years	4	3.4%	7	4.7%
26 to 29 Years	1	0.9%	5	3.3%
30 to 34 Years	1	0.9%	5	3.3%
35 to 39 Years	0	0.0%	5	3.3%
40 to 44 Years	0	0.0%	3	2.0%
45 to 49 Years	1	0.9%	1	0.7%
50 Years and Over	0	0.0%	1	0.7%
All Ages	117	100.0%	150	100.0%

Day and Time Analysis of Shootings in Delaware 2011

Table 10 shows the day and time that the 155 shooting incidents took place. The most common day of the week that shooting incidents took place was Sunday. The most common times that shooting incidents occurred were between 9:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m.

Table 10 - Day and Time of 2011 Shooting Incidents								
Time of Shooting	Day of Shooting							
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Total
12:00 a.m. to 02:59 a.m.	8	2	3	1	3	4	8	29
03:00 a.m. to 05:59 a.m.	3	0	1	0	0	2	3	9
06:00 a.m. to 08:59 a.m.	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
09:00 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	4
12:00 p.m. to 02:59 p.m.	3	0	0	1	1	2	3	10
03:00 p.m. to 05:59 p.m.	3	5	1	4	3	2	0	18
06:00 p.m. to 08:59 p.m.	5	5	7	7	5	5	5	39
09:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.	8	6	10	6	1	7	7	45
Total	31	20	22	19	15	22	26	155

Victim Injuries, Suspect Motives, and Victim-Offender Relationships

Table 11 displays the areas of the body where shooting victims were hit by gunfire. Victims were shot in the lower body (legs, feet, buttocks) in 48 (35%) of the 137 cases where victim injury information was available. Injuries of the upper body (chest, back, abdomen) occurred in 43 (31.4%) of cases, while injuries to the head, face or neck were present in 14 (10.2%) of cases. The remaining shootings involved injuries to the arms or hands (10.2%), or injuries to multiple areas of the body (13.1%).

Table 11 - Shooting Victims by Area of Body Shot		
Area of Victims Body	Victims	Percent
Legs / Feet / Buttocks	48	35.0%
Chest / Back / Abdomen	43	31.4%
Head / Face / Neck	14	10.2%
Arm / Hand	14	10.2%
Multiple Injuries	18	13.1%
Total	137	100.0%

The ultimate motives for committing a crime may not become apparent until well into a criminal investigation or sometimes not even until a case is being adjudicated. Table 12 displays information about apparent motives and/or relevant circumstances for 53 shooting incidents where both a suspect had been identified and specific information was provided by law enforcement officers about the motive or circumstances surrounding an incident. The most common motive was Robbery (47.2%), followed by Altercations (34%), Drug-Related Disputes (9.4%), and violence in intimate partner situations (7.5%).

Table 12 - Circumstances and Apparent Motives for Shootings		
Motives	Suspects	Percent
Robbery	25	47.2%
Altercation/Dispute/Argument	18	34.0%
Drug-Related Shooting	5	9.4%
Intimate Partner Violence	4	7.5%
Gang-related	1	1.9%
Total	53	100.0%

For incidents where at least one suspect had been identified by name and victim-offender relationship information was provided, the relationships between all suspects and all victims involved in an incident were examined. The victim-offender relationship for the incident was then classified based on the closest relationship between any suspect and any victim. For example, if the incident involved three suspects and one victim and the three offender-victim relationships were friend, stranger, and someone known in the community, ‘friend’ would be the relationship level assigned to the incident.

The relationships between shooting suspects and their victims at the incident level are shown in Table 13. The most frequent victim to offender relationship was Acquaintance (44.2%), followed by Stranger (30.8%), and Otherwise Known (13.5%).

Table 13 - Victim to Suspect Relationship - Incident Level		
Types of Relationships	Number	Percent
Acquaintance	23	44.2%
Stranger	16	30.8%
Otherwise Known	7	13.5%
Spouse	2	3.8%
Friend	2	3.8%
Sibling	1	1.9%
Neighbor	1	1.9%
Total	52	100.0%

Conclusion

In 2011, 172 individuals were injured or killed by gunfire in Delaware, not including shootings that were accidental, self-inflicted, or committed in self-defense. Over half (55.2%) of the 172 shooting victims were shot in Wilmington, 25% of victims were shot in suburban New Castle County, 14% were shot in Kent County, and 5.8% were shot in Sussex County. Thirty-one shooting victims died from their injuries. As of March 2014, a total of 249 suspects were implicated in the shootings, of which 125 were identified by name and 104 were arrested.

Of the 125 known suspects, 120 were unique individuals. Males accounted for 92.5% of unique known shooting suspects and 88.4% of shooting victims. Black males alone accounted for 85.8% of known shooting suspects and 78.5% of shooting victims. Known suspects were younger on average than victims; the average age for known shooting suspects was 24.1 years old, compared to 27.8 years old for victims. For incidents where age information was available for both suspects and victims, more than two-thirds of incidents involved suspects and victims who were of the same age range.

Shooting suspects were more likely to have a prior misdemeanor, drug, weapon, violent, or other felony charge in their Delaware criminal history compared to shooting victims. A high proportion of both suspects and victims had their first contact with Delaware's criminal justice system as juveniles.

Robbery was the most common apparent motive for/circumstance surrounding shooting incidents (47.2%), followed by altercations (34%), drugs (9.4%), and violence related to intimate partner situations (7.5%). Suspects and victims knew each other in 69.2% of cases where victims-offender relationship information was described in the arrest report.